

Topic Page: [Mason-Dixon Line](#)

Definition: **Mason-Dixon Line** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Border of Pennsylvania with Maryland and West Virginia, USA. It is named after the men who surveyed it in the 1760s. It was regarded as the dividing line between slave and free states at the time of the Missouri Compromise (1820-21), and became the popular name for the boundary between North and South in the USA.

Summary Article: **Mason-Dixon Line**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland (running between lat. 39°43′26.3″N and lat. 39°43′17.6″N), surveyed by the English team of Charles Mason, a mathematician and astronomer, and Jeremiah Dixon, a mathematician and land surveyor, between 1763 and 1767. The ambiguous description of the boundaries in the Maryland and Pennsylvania charters led to a protracted disagreement between the proprietors of the two colonies, the Penns of Pennsylvania and the Calverts of Maryland. The dispute was submitted to the English court of chancery in 1735. A compromise between two families in 1760 resulted in the appointment of Mason and Dixon. By 1767 the surveyors had run their line 244 mi (393 km) west from the Delaware border, every fifth milestone bearing the Penn and Calvert arms. The survey was completed to the western limit of Maryland in 1773; in 1779 the line was extended to mark the southern boundary of Pennsylvania with Virginia (present-day West Virginia). Before the Civil War the term “Mason-Dixon Line” popularly designated the boundary dividing the slave states from the free states, and it is still used to distinguish the South from the North.

See study by E. Danson (2001).

APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

Mason Dixon line. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/mason_dixon_line



The Columbia Encyclopedia, © Columbia University Press 2018



The Columbia Encyclopedia, © Columbia University Press 2018

APA

Mason Dixon line. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/mason_dixon_line

Chicago

"Mason-Dixon Line." In *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University. 8th ed. Columbia University Press, 2018. https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/mason_dixon_line

Harvard

Mason Dixon line. (2018). In P. Lagasse & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia*. (8th ed.). [Online]. New York: Columbia University Press. Available from: https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/mason_dixon_line [Accessed 18 October 2019].

MLA

"Mason-Dixon Line." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, Columbia University Press, 8th edition, 2018. *Credo Reference*, https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/mason_dixon_line. Accessed 18 Oct. 2019.